

INTERNAL USE ONLY

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Subject: **Gold King Mine Release – RA Update**
Date: **02 October 2015**

Background

The Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado has had a continuous discharge of acidic mine drainage that is a historic contributor of lead, arsenic, zinc, copper, and cadmium into the Cement Creek drainage of the Animas River watershed. On August 5, 2015, an estimated 3 million gallons of mine wastewater released into the upper portions of Cement Creek, and into the Animas River.

- Based on EPA surface water data collected following the August 5, 2015 Gold King Mine release, San Juan River water quality in Navajo Nation has returned to pre-event conditions. EPA issued a press release on August 19, 2015 stating that water quality in the San Juan River has now returned to levels measured before the release entered the Navajo Nation.
- EPA Region 9 continues to coordinate with representatives from the Navajo Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the States of AZ, Utah, NM, and federal agencies Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, and US Geological Survey. EPA R9 is coordinating with R8, R6, involved State agencies and Navajo Nation to develop a long-term sampling strategy for implementation by the three EPA Regions.
- **The EPA national website now includes both San Juan River and Lake Powell data.**

Current Actions

- **Sampling on the San Juan River is undertaken twice a week at sampling locations on the Navajo Nation. Surface water and sediment samples are collected on Monday and Thursday of each week. Force protection is being provided by the Navajo Nation. Sample teams are being managed from the Durango ICP.**
- **The Action Memo decision document is in final headquarters review; each region will concur on the document and Mathy Stanislaus will sign it. The Administrative Record for this decision document is being placed in the NN library in Window Rock, AZ.**
- **The Region has received a report with the results of the water tank inspection, sampling and analysis. The water in all of the tanks met all applicable water quality standards for irrigation and livestock use. The remaining EPA water tanks are being demobilized starting on 2 October.**
- **EPA will complete the pending Hay deliveries by 3 October. The Region has also arranged for 500 salt blocks to be provided to the Navajo Nation, for distribution to ranchers and farmers. The salt blocks will be delivered to the NN maintenance staff in the Shiprock Chapter.**
- **FOSC Donn Zuroski and 3 Coast Guard Incident Management Assist Team members that were in Window Rock assisting the NN emergency managers with their response and recovery work, demobilized starting on 2 October. The NN EOC is rapidly moving from a response to a recovery posture.**
- **The Region has assigned a liaison officer, Sona Chilingaryan, to coordinate regional actions with the Navajo Nation regarding the GKM response, moving forward.**
- **The Public Hotline number (1-844-607-9700)**